

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 025968
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

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S/S - MR. FLEISCHER
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TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 025968

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, KS, US

SUBJECT: FACILITATION OF TONGSUN PARK TESTIMONY BEFORE
CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES

1. ROK AMBASSADOR KIM MET EARLY JANUARY 31 WITH ASSISTANT
SECRETARIES HOLBROOKE AND BENNET FOLLOWING HIS RETURN LATE
JANUARY 30 FROM ONE WEEK'S CONSULTATION IN SEOUL.

2. KIM REPORTED PRESIDENT PARK'S FULL CONCURRENCE THAT
TONGSUN PARK COME TO WASHINGTON TO TESTIFY IN EXECUTIVE
SESSION BEFORE THE HOUSE AND SENATE ETHICS COMMITTEES
ALONG LINES THE AMBASSADOR HAD DISCUSSED WITH O'NEILL AND
PETER WHITE BEFORE HE WENT TO SEOUL. KIM ALSO REPORTED
THAT THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE HAD CONFIRMED THAT TONGSUN
PARK WAS WILLING TO COME HERE FOR THIS PURPOSE. IN
RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, KIM CONFIRMED UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT
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ROKG COULD NOT AGREE TO TESTIMONY BY FORMER ROK AMBASSADORS,
HOWEVER, AS IT WOULD BE A DEMEANING AND EMBARRASSING
DEPARTURE FROM DIPLOMATIC TRADITION AND TREATY WHICH
WOULD INJURE THE ROKG IN EYES OF WORLD.

3. SUBSEQUENTLY, HOLBROOKE AND BENNET VISITED SPEAKER
O'NEILL AND DISCUSSED THE HIGHLY POSITIVE RESPONSE TO BE

CONVEYED OFFICIALLY TO THE SPEAKER LATER IN THE DAY BY

AMBASSADOR KIM. THEY ALSO POINTED OUT THE DISADVANTAGES TO THE USG IN OUR INTERNATIONAL DEALINGS OF ANY INSISTENCE ON OBTAINING TESTIMONY FROM THE FORMER ROK AMBASSADORS IN CONTRAVENTION OF DEEPLY HELD INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE. O'NEILL SEEMED RECEPTIVE TO THIS CONSIDERATION. ETHICS DEPUTY COUNSEL PETER WHITE WAS ALSO PRESENT AT THE DISCUSSION.

4. O'NEILL'S STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE LATER MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR KIM (SENT TO YOU IN SEPTTEL) LEFT NO DOUBT WHETHER THE KOREANS HAD BEEN COOPERATIVE. HE ALSO HANDLED VERY SKILLFULLY THE QUESTION OF TESTIMONY BY THE AMBASSADORS. O'NEILL WAS FLANKED BY ETHICS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FLYNT, RANKING MINORITY MEMBER FLOYD SPENCE, AND DEPUTY COUNSEL PETER WHITE. THIS MAY REDUCE ROOM FOR MANEUVER FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO BELITTLE THE KOREAN RESPONSE. O'NEILL'S DRAMATIC REVELATION THAT PARK WOULD BE ARRIVING HERE "WITHIN DAYS" ALSO GIVES SIGNIFICANT IMPETUS TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

5. ROK EMBASSY COUNSELOR PARK KUN-WOO, WHO ACCOMPANIED AMBASSADOR KIM TO THE HILL, INFORMS US THAT THE MEETING WENT WELL, ALTHOUGH THERE WAS MORE PRESSURE REGARDING THE FORMER AMBASSADORS THAN HAD BEEN EXPECTED. THIS WAS RAISED
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FIRST BY FLYNT, AND THE CONGRESSMEN STATED THAT THEY WANTED IT CLEAR THAT THEY HAD OFFICIALLY MADE THE REQUEST. AMBASSADOR KIM STRONGLY STATED REASONS WHY ROKG COULD NOT ACCOMMODATE THE CONGRESS IN THAT FASHION AND COUNSELOR PARK FELT THIS WAS REASONABLY WELL RECEIVED. O'NEILL CONCLUDED THAT HE WAS NOT ASKING THE AMBASSADOR NOW FOR TESTIMONY BY THE DIPLOMATS, BUT NOTED THAT THIS MATTER MIGHT BE RAISED AGAIN IN THE COURSE OF THE COMMITTEE'S HEARINGS.

6. FOLLOWING THE MEETING WITH O'NEILL, AMBASSADOR KIM CALLED ON SENATE ETHICS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN STEVENSON (AS WE HAD ADVISED EARLIER) ALSO TO REPORT THAT TONGSUN PARK WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR COMMITTEE HEARINGS. STEVENSON WAS FLANKED BY THE COMMITTEE'S RANKING MINORITY MEMBER HARRISON SCHMITT AND BY STAFFER DANIEL SWILLINGER (JUST BACK FROM OBSERVATION OF JUSTICE INTERROGATION IN SEOUL). TO KOREANS' SURPRISE, SENATORS PRESSED MUCH HARDER FOR TESTIMONY BY FORMER AMBASSADORS AND ALSO RAISED NAME OF YI HU-RAK. IT IS TOO EARLY TO EVALUATE THIS DEVELOPMENT. EARLIER IN THE DAY SWILLINGER HAD EMPHASIZED TO THE DEPARTMENT THE COOPERATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE OF ROK JUSTICE MINISTRY OFFICIALS DURING THE SEOUL

INTERROGATION OF TONGSUN PARK AND HAD APPEARED VERY GRATIFIED AT THE PROSPECT FOR TONGSUN PARK TO COME HERE FOR HEARINGS. VANCE

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O 010541Z FEB 78 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 025968

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS FOR BRZEZINSKI ONLY

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 025968 SENT ACTION SEOUL FEB 01.
QUOTE S E C R E T STATE 025968

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

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TAGS: PGOV, KS, US

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